

INSIDE THE BELTWAY

George wasn't there

In a rare public response, the CIA denies Vice President George Bush was a CIA operative in the early 1960s. CIA spokeswoman Sharron Basso said that a George William Bush, who worked the night shift at CIA headquarters during that period, apparently was the "Mr. George Bush" referred to in a recently discovered FBI memorandum. A story in The Nation magazine suggested the man referred to is George Herbert Walker Bush, the vice president.

The story is based on a memo from J. Edgar Hoover to the director of the State Department's bureau of intelligence and research. The document, released in the late 1970s among 98,755 pages in a Freedom of Information suit, is headed "Assassination of President John F. Kennedy Nov. 22, 1963." It discusses the briefing of "George Bush of the Central Intelligence Agency" shortly after the assassination of the president.

The magazine quotes "a source with close connections to the intelligence community" as saying Mr. Bush worked for the CIA in 1960 or 1961, using his oil business, Zapata Off-Shore Company, as a front. During that time, according to his authorized biography, Mr. Bush traveled in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Japan, Australia and Western Europe selling Zapata's services.

Ms. Basso said the other George Bush — not the George Herbert Walker Bush who is vice president — worked on the night watch at CIA headquarters. "[This] would have been the appropriate place to have received such an FBI report. This was apparently the George Bush referred to in the article," she said. George William Bush left the CIA in 1964 to work for the Defense Intelligence Agency, which he has since left. His current whereabouts are unknown, the CIA official said. The other-George Mr. Bush was appointed CIA director in 1975 by President Gerald Ford.

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times A-8
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____

Date 21 July 88